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AUTHOR Markland, Ulla
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ABSTRACT

Smoking is not an issue for children before the 5th or 6th grade except in rare cases. About 80 children in the 3rd, 5th and 7th grades were interviewed about their smoking habits and their views on smoking. Younger students had a strongly negative attitude to smoking but in the middle years toughness is important. Smoking is something which is forbidden and therefore very exciting. At all ages, pupils do not talk about smoking amongst themselves. The investigation points out the importance of talking and debating the smoking problem in order to increase the children's awareness of what influences their own and others smoking behaviors. Dramatic activities are recommended as a method of involving children and adding insight into different ways of thinking and acting with regard to smoking. (BP)

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Reports from

THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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SMOKING IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLS
Interviews and improvisations

Project
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TOBACCO RESEARCH

Ulla Marklund

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 1970 the World Health Organisation dealt with a report comprising known results of research on smoking and health. On the basis of this report, WHO made an announcement emphasising the serious health risks in connection with smoking and recommended its member countries to try and combat the smoking habit. In 1974 WHO called together a so-called expert committee, with the task of both summarising current documentation on the harmful effects of smoking and suggesting measures to be taken against smoking. The expert committee's report (WHO 1975) ascertains that the existing research results lead to the conclusion that a decrease in smoking can improve health and lessen the risk of an early death in industrial countries more than any other factor within prophylactic health care. They consider that the problem ought to be the subject of political decisions at government level, in order that preventive measures can be coordinated and have a penetrating effect.

The objectives follow three main guidelines:
- children do not start smoking
- smokers stop smoking
- those who cannot stop smoking transfer to less harmful forms of smoking.

The expert committee makes recommendations regarding education, direction at special target groups, legislation and how to protect non-smokers from a smoky environment. They consider the social, psychological and pharmacological reasons for people smoking.

The Tobacco Investigation (Measures against tobacco smoking, 1973) underlines the importance of behavioral research with the tobacco field, and especially emphasises the question of the smoking début and the acquisition of a sufficiently nega-

tive attitude in order to refrain from making a smoking début. In their statement on the Tobacco Investigation Report, the National Education Authority underline the importance of research on attitudes against smoking, above all such attitudes as "both in the short and long term stand their ground in the confrontation with group pressure, which is an important factor in the circle of friends". (Statement of opinion on the National Social Welfare Board's Tobacco Investigation, 1974).

OBJECTIVE

The project Behavioral Tobacco Research, which was started in Autumn, 1975 on the initiative of the Folksam Industrial Injury Foundation, has the objective of influencing children and young people not to start smoking. The first part of the project aims at finding out why children smoke and which arguments against smoking could influence children of different ages not to smoke. This is to be the basis of planning different activities with the purpose of decreasing smoking amongst children and young people. At a later stage of the project, some of these activities will hopefully be tested and evaluated.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A study of previous research shows that there is very little knowledge of the reasons for children starting to smoke.

One type of research aims at charting the smoking habits of children and young people and possible changes in these. Since 1971, an annual questionnaire investigation has been carried out amongst several thousand children in the 6th and 9th grades in compulsory school and in the 2nd grade in the upper secondary school (Jonsson & Hibell, 1975) in respect of alcohol, narcotics and tobacco habits. The latest published report is from the 1974 investigation. According to this, 11 % of the children in the 6th grade smoke, which means a decrease of 4 % from 1971. Their cigarette consumption is, however, moderate - only 1 % state that they smoke more than 6 cigarettes per day. 45 % of the girls and 31 % of the boys in the 9th grade admit to smoking. The number of boys who smoke has de-

creased by 10 % since 1971, while the girls smoke more or less the same as then. 16 % of the boys and 24 % of the girls smoke more than 6 cigarettes a day. If the boys smoke less than the girls, they take more snuff instead. In the 6th grade, 15 % of the boys admit to taking snuff as compared with 2 % of the girls. In the 9th grade 25 % of the boys take snuff as compared with 4 % of the girls, and in the upper secondary school the figures are approximately as high, but the frequency of snuff-taking varies in different streams. Unfortunately the investigation does not reveal whether the same pupils both smoke and take snuff or whether they take snuff instead of smoking.

It is at the upper level of the compulsory school, therefore, that the children start smoking seriously, even if a large number of them have already tried smoking previously.

Another type of investigation concerns the personality of the young smoker. Bynner (1969) has made an intensive study of English boys between 11 and 15. He finds that the smokers have a different social life to the non-smokers. They like to be together with girls and long to be adults. They are opposed to authority, both at home and in school. However, Bynner does not find that the smokers compensate for feelings of inadequacy by smoking. Given, the smokers do worse in school than the non-smokers, but, according to Bynner, this depends more on lack of interest in school than lack of intelligence.

Stewart & Livson (1966) find in a longitudinal investigation that the rebellious attitude which is typical for young smokers preceeds the actual smoking and only becomes more defined as the young people grow older. The more rebellious they are against the adult world, the earlier they adopt its habits!

Eysenck (1965) has also interested himself in the smokers personality and found that adult smokers are more extrovert (outgoing) than non-smokers. Lindström & Tibblin (1971) describe smokers as impulsive, with the ability to get carried away and with a need for variety - against non-smokers who are described as being strong-principled and people of habit.

An investigation has also been carried out to see what picture young people have of adult smokers, to find out whether they connect smoking behaviour with any other desirable characteristics. According to a German investigation from 1969 (Tobaken och vi, Nos. 2-3, 1970), young people between 12 and 18 have this impression of a smoker: "The smoker presents himself by and large as a stylish, good-natured person, without rigid principles. His moral superiority is not so pronounced. In young people´s eyes he is a strong person since he can "afford" to smoke. If the cigarette, cigar or pipe is admired in strong characters as "smart", "tough" and superior, it can also on the other hand be understood as an attractive sign of human weakness". According to this, young people do obviously strive to be adult, but not just any adult. "The image of the non-smoker is not very desirable for young people. He is considered to be steadfast, industrious and also a miser. He is considered to be not only enxiously worried about his health, but also a guardian of law and morals who wants to educate and reform others" (p. 44).

A third type of investigation deals with the reasons why people smoke and what needs smoking satisfies for the individual. Since this kind of investigation deals with already established smokers, in this connection it is not of such interest. (Tomkins, 1966; McKennel, 1970). What is more important are the theories and investigations on the reasons behind a smoking début, and the development of the actual habit of smoking. Which demands are satisfied by smoking in the person who is not an established smoker?

Bynner (1965) considers that the social pressure, i.e. the influence of friends, is the main reason for young people smoking. They smoke in order to feel that they are the same as their frineds. But more than half of the smokers say also that they smoke when they feel bored, almost half when they are nervous, and approximately a third when they want to concentrate. This would point to smoking satisfying other needs than the desire to belong to a group. The author speculates as to whether they have simply adopted the explanations from adults or if they truly feel that smoking satisfies these

needs.Whatever the explanation is, when trying to influence smoking one must naturally take into account the fact that young people believe that smoking helps against boredom and pressure, since this is a strong argument for them to continue smoking.

The picture of the young smoker is probably of great importance for the possible smoker-to-be. In the same way as it is not desirable to imitate just any adult, there are only certain characteristics in people of the same age which are attractive. Bynner gets his experimental subjects to define which characteristics are typical for the smoker and the non-smoker. Then they defined to what extent these characteristics described themselves, firstly as they are and secondly as they would like to be. In this way, he found out what is typical for the smoker and if this is considered to be desirable. He established three basic factors: success at school, toughness and precociousness (which means a kind of maturity which boys of this age do not strive after).

The typical smoker is seen as someone who is a failure at school. This does not give him status either in his own eyes or those of other people. Both smokers and non-smokers value success at school highly and in their description of their ideal self, they desire greater success at school. This conforms with what was established in the Swedish research on young people, where 3/4 of the young people wished that they did better at school than they do (Andersson & Wallin, 1971).

The fact that the smoker does worse at school than the non-smoker does nothing, therefore, to make him popular among his friends.

As regards toughness, the situation is different. Everyone was unanimous in that the smoker is tough, and this is to be desired. There is a certain difference between the groups in just how much toughness is desirable, and where the non-smoker sometimes thinks that the smoker is a little too tough. In general, however, toughness is a very attractive characteristic which the smoker possesses. To stop smoking would therefore mean that the smoker defined himself as not being

tough, and to belong to a group to which is not attributed this desirable characteristic either by himself or by others.

So-called precociousness has a different meaning to the smoker than to the non-smoker. Everyone agrees that this characteristic is typical for the smoker, but is evaluated differently in the different groups. All the groups are satisfied with the maturity they have themselves achieved and do not want to be any different. What the non-smoker considers to be a sign of precociousness, the smoker considers to be a sign of maturity. The idea is therefore important to the smoker, in that if he stops smoking he will identify himself with a group he considers immature. On the other hand, the association between smoking and precociousness ought not to cause anyone to start smoking, since the non-smoker does not consider this characteristic to be desirable.

In an investigation of boys from 10 to 11 1/2, an attempt has been made to compare the picture they have of themselves with the picture of a smoker (Bland, Bewley & Day, 1975). Not even the boys who smoke every day identify themselves as smokers. They regard the smoker as a tough, stupid, sloppy trouble-maker. The smokers certainly have a more positive attitude than the non-smokers, but do not identify themselves as such. The author regards this to be a great obstacle when trying to get children to stop smoking - how are they to be receptive to education directed towards the smoker if they do not identify themselves as such?

The fourth type of investigation which is of value in this connection deals with the socio-psychological and development-psychological fields and not directly with smoking. I have mainly used experiences in this field in planning the outline of this investigation.

RESEARCH - REALITY

As can be seen, we can gain a lot of knowledge from previous research on how much young people smoke, which of them smoke and why they smoke. But in spite of this, most attempts to

influence the smoking habits of young people have had poor results. One explanation is possibly that the research results have simply not been exploited when planning education and information campaigns. This is actually quite probable since the results of the research have a tendency to remain with the researchers rather than be passed on in a comprehensible manner to those who are in charge of educational and information measures. Where researchers have more actively taken part in information campaigns, it has been to evaluate different strategies and not to plan them. This was the case, for example, with Bynner's extensive English investigation. As a result of his investigation, of which one of the objectives was to measure the effect of information campaigns run by the then Ministry of Health, he has later made suggestions for diffeent strategies but these do not appear to have been acted upon.

Another reason for the poor results of the educational and information measures can be an exaggerated belief in the children's - as in adults' - common sense. An accepted supposition seems to be that if you realise how dangerous and stupid it is to smoke, then you will stop doing it. Children should therefore let logic steer their behaviour to a far greater extent than adults do. Few teachers would support such a supposition but we act, nevertheless, in many respects as though this was the case.

When children are requested in a school environment to answer questions in a questionnaire, they use their logical reasoning and reply as sensibly and possibly as frankly to the questions as they can. They have learnt that this is the way to behave in school. They sit alone and wonder how they would behave in a situation which the questionnaire, at best, outlines for them.

But the actual smoking occurs in a completely different environment. Surrounded by one's friends out of school, it is no longer the logical ability to reason which is the most important. The aim of being together is to have fun, to think of something to do, to experience excitement. The rules for being together are decided on other grounds, and partly by

people other than those who decide the rules for classroom behaviour.

By this I do not mean to say that children do not give truthful answers to the questionnaires on smoking habits and attitudes. But I want to emphasise that children's behaviour in a given situation is steered by the conditions prevailing in that precise situation. The evaluations made by children when they are sitting alone and thinking and trying to be sensible can often be completely different in the situation itself.

The most important point in my research planning has, for the above reasons, been to try and understand what happens in the actual smoking situation. One of the means has been to use interviews instead of questionnaires. In this way it is possible to follow how the children have reasoned out the questions and not just obtain the results of their reasoning. The questions have also been about the actual smoking situations and their behaviour in these situations, much more than their attitude to smoking and knowledge of the harmful effects. Another means attempted has been to interview the children in a group rather than individually. The interviews were carried out on groups of children who were together even outside school in order to obtain the variations in reasoning between the different gangs. I am aware, however, that friends in different gangs and, perhaps above all, of certain age groups can have a restrictive effect on what they are prepared to discuss in the presence of an adult. We have therefore used individual interviews as well as group interviews amongst the older classes. In order that the children would not be afraid to talk about their smoking habits, we have emphasised that the investigation has nothing to do with school and that the results will not be reported to the school. The interviews were carried out by myself and three other psychologists without any cooperation with the school, although they have taken place in school and during school hours.

INVESTIGATION GROUPS

The interviews were carried out with a total of 80 children

in the 3rd, 5th and 7th grades. In the 3rd grade we made 4 group interviews, in the 5th grade 5 group interviews and 10 individual ones, and in the 7th grade 4 group interviews and 15 individual ones. We have interviewed approximately the same number of boys as girls. The length of the individual interviews varied between 15 and 40 minutes and the group interviews between 40 and 80 minutes. The interviews were taped and analyses made from the transcripts of these tapes.

We have made sure that the children come from differing kinds of housing areas, but apart from that, the choice of children has entirely depended upon getting teachers to "lend" their pupils during lesson time. At this stage I also chose to make an intensive investigation with a small number of children and a costly method of investigation rather than a large, representative, random investigation of children with a relatively cheap method of investigation. This is motivated, above all, by my wish to get as close as possible to the actual smoking situation.

The grades were chosen with consideration to the distribution of smoking among the different age groups. In the 3rd grade, most of the children had no experience themselves of smoking and in this way it ought to be possible to find out how they reason about smoking before they themselves are confronted with it. In the 5th grade many have experimented with smoking, but there are still very few habitual smokers. Here it should be possible to see how the smoking habit develops, which kind of smoking situations they are confronted with and what they think about experimental smoking. In the 7th grade, most smoking débuts seem to occur, while, at the same time, many progress from experimental smoking to more habitual smoking. The transfer to the upper level means a radical change in the school environment and often a change of schools as well as class-mates. In some schools smoking is legalised by a smoking area. In the upper level, smoking behaviour similar to that of adults can be expected, and it is interesting to see whether the anti-smoking arguments of the adult world find an audience in this group.

According to the plan, we should have interviewed considerably more then we actually did. This was because, after a while, the interviews revealed no further information and the same reasoning and the same arguments were repeated throughout the group. We discovered also that this method did not get sufficiently close to the real smoking situation. The next step was therefore to outline situations based on the knowledge of smoking situations gained in the interviews, which the pupils then had to dramatise. By letting the pupils act roles in a role-play improvised by themselves, we hoped to get as close to the actual smoking situation as we considered it was possible to come. Before I go into the planning of the role-plays in more detail, I will present the results of the interviews, since it was these which were the basis for the planning of the work with role-plays.

INTERVIEW INVESTIGATION

INTERVIEWS IN THE 3RD GRADE WITH APPROXIMATELY 20 PUPILS

Children of this age seem to have a very definite understanding that smoking is not good for you and they don't want to start smoking.

The children have a diverse knowledge of the ways in which smoking is dangerous:

"You get sick in your lungs"
"Your toes get burnt off!"
"You get tar in your throat"
"Your hands get wellow".

They know also that it is expensive to smoke and that smokers litter the countryside, pollute the air and can easily cause fires.

The children's negative attitude to smoking seems to depend mainly on the fact that they have to be in a smoky environment:

"It's sickening,"
"It smells awful"
"Disturbs other people who don't smoke"

The children are strongly influenced by others' smoking.

"When you are in a car, I think it's sickening when you have to travel a long way"
"My little sister always gets tired in the car because my Mummy smokes so much"
"Once I got so tired when they were smoking that I went outside and did some ice-skating, you have got to have air"
"Once when we had a party at home I got a headache"
"You start coughing as soon as you get there" (to a friend both of whose parents smoke).

They see smoking as air pollution:

"The air will get poisoned - in 500 years time the sun won't shine"

And as an environmental danger:

"They litter the countryside"

They are also worried about people who smoke:

"I think about my Granddad, he smokes so I'm afraid he is going to die"

The children speculate on why people smoke although they know it is bad:

"You get more energy from cigarettes"
"They taste nice"
"They can't stop"

They believe too that TV and publicity influence smoking habits and have an exaggerated belief in how quickly you can become addicted:

"You start by chance and then you can't stop"

The reason why young people smoke is quite clear to the 3rd graders: they smoke so they won't be mobbed by their mates, they can't belong to the gang if they don't smoke. The children are quite worried about this because they think they will be forced to smoke when they get into the upper level.

Are they going to start smoking themselves?
The spontaneous answer is always no, but when the discussion continues, they are often unanimous in that they can't really decide now:

"You can't decide now when you are young whether you are going to smoke"

"When you grow up, you forget that you weren´t going to smoke"
"I don´t want to start smoking, but perhaps you start anyway when you get older"

They are aware that it is difficult to make an independent decision regarding smoking, but possibly they exaggerate the drama of it:

"Im afraid someone will force me to smoke"
"Perhaps there will be a whole gang and they will force me into the toilet"

Who decides then?

"You can really say that it´s your friends who decide if you are going to start smoking, because when they start you can´t stop yourself. Then they will say, oh you are daft, you don´t smoke, we´re much better than you, and so on, and then you start because you don´t want to get left out".
"If you say that you don´t smoke, and the rest of the gang do, then they will boo you out. They won´t listen because they want to smoke themselves".

The above two sentences display a very fine insight into one of the socio-psychological mechanisms behind young people smoking.

COMMENTS

Among the 9 year olds, there was a distinct attitude against smoking based both on knowledge of the harmful effects as well as a personal opinion that smoking is stupid and sickening. The opinions were mainly based on experiences of indirect smoking.

Here we find a very positive attitude to not smoking. If you want to reinforce an already existing attitude, which is always easier than changing one, then grade 3 is a suitable target group.

The values one has are not, however, tested until transferred into actions. The 9 year old who is offered a cigarette can relatively easily say no. He can very often refer with dignity intact to what Mummy and Daddy think, he can say that he

thinks it smells awful, he can count on sympathy for arguments about pollution, etc. The problems do not become serious before he can no longer hold his own in arguments among the circle of friends. For this reason it is dubious whether resources should be aimed at this group. A couple of years later, when the smoking situation starts occurring relatively often and the previous arguments are no longer acceptable, there is a much greater need for help in showing one's negative attitude to smoking by positive action.

INTERVIEWS IN THE 5TH GRADE WITH APPROXIMATELY 30 PUPILS

These children know very well that smoking is dangerous to the health and consider this the most important argument against smoking. The environmental aspects are not brought up spontaneously as they were in the 3rd grade. Neither do economic aspects appear to be important. What is important is not to appear a coward in front of one's friends. Not to smoke is a sign of cowardice.

Children react to other people smoking in the same way as they do in the 3rd grade:

"It irritates my eyes when someone is sitting smoking"
"I think it's especially awful when they smoke in the car"
"I don't like the smoke, but I don't know why"
"I think it's a bit unpleasant when Daddy smokes"
"If you are walking down the street, people blow smoke straight in your face".

They speculate on the reasons for people smoking:

"Many people believe that it is tough, but when they grow up maybe they do it because they are nervous"
"Grown-ups think it's soothing, so they have a tag"
"It's probably a habit and although they know it's dangerous, they can't stop"
"Because they have got nothing else to do"
"Grown-ups smoke because they are tired of life"

What about children, why do they smoke?

"If it's children of our age who smoke, then they are together with older children and drink beer in the square"
"It's those who have a bad time, have no contact with their parents"
"They have such a bad time at home and have nobody to discuss their problems with, so they try to get rid of them by smoking and drinking strong beer"

"Some parents give their children money and say 'take this and go and buy yourself something'. The parents do it because they don´t want their children at home, so perhaps they go and buy cigarettes. It´s because they (the parents) have no time for them".

Now and then they worry about parental contact which comes out in the interviews. It is noticeable that parental authority is no longer so obvious and there is therefore an increased insecurity and feeling of being homeless.

"Many who haven´t got anywhere else to go, go down to the square and just sit there drinking beer and so on".

The worst thing that can happen is:

"If you haven´t got any friends to go to and when you go home Mummy has a new boyfriend so you can´t stay there either, you feel burned out".

They feel directed to their friends and become more dependent on them and their opinions. The actual smoking début can occur in this way:

"You take a puff if someone offers it and you don´t think it tastes nice but you don´t dare say anything else, so you say 'that´s nice, can I have another puff' or something like that. So you get lured into it like that and you can´t stop because everybody else would say 'but you said you liked it, so have another one', and maybe they offer you one and you don´t want to seem a coward".
"Or maybe someone wants to try because they wonder what it´s like if they´ve never smellt it or anything before. Small children can do that and maybe get into the habit. Smoke a little bit now and then and get into the habit".
"You can get pulled into it, by a gang and so on. Someone starts, and deep down the others don´t think it is tough, but because they want to seem tough the others start too. So it can happen to anybody just because they want to seem tough".

The social pressure is very strong and, above all, one must not seem a coward.

"Nearly everybody does things that aren´t good just because they don´t want to be cowards. They do things, pinch things in shops and so on so they can boast about it, but when they grow up they will probably be ashamed of themselves".
"It´s exactly the same when there is a party, when someone´s parents are away and you take something along with you. You can´t say no because it´s the leader of the gang who decides".

The following discussion shows clearly how logic is forced to succumb to social pressures.

Pupil: "Maybe you don´t dare say no, then you are a coward".
Interviewer: "Are you a coward then?"
Pupil: "You are tough if you smoke and a coward if you don´t, but really it´s the other way round."
Interviewer: "But why is it like this?"
Pupil: "You are so frightened of being called a coward, of being mobbed and so on, you want to get into the gang."

In the 5th grade you can no longer refer to Mummy and Daddy when you want to refuse something. Those who decide are:

"The highest in the class, those who are, not best in different things, but who wear the nicest clothes and so on, those are the ones who decide over everyone else, the ones in between and the lowest"
"You can say that it´s your mates who decide."

And it is not even the mates you like best:

"Really it´s the ones who are the biggest cowards who decide".
"Those who smoke and are rude to the teachers have a lot more friends because, I don´t know why, it ought to be the other way arond, that they don´t have any at all."
"They are the biggest and they keep in with those who are a bit older".

Friends say that you are stupid and a coward if you don´t smoke, but

"they are really afraid of being ill too, but they don´t say so".
"You ought to stop being with those who smoke, so they can stand there on their own and smoke and see how much fun that is."
"You don´t dare because then you will lose your friends".
"You´re frightened of being mobbed."

The children have a much more qualified attitude to mobbing than those in the 3rd grade, they are conscious that mobbing goes on in certain classes and gangs. If you are mobbed

"the only thing to do is to move, avoid them, try to get a friend instead."

For different reasons, then, they don´t dare say no when friends offer cigarettes. What other alternatives are there?

"You can always leave."
"You can pretend you get a rash or something."

"You can just say you are allergic. I´m allergic, although not against that, but you don´t have to say so and then you don´t lie, you just trick them."
"You should keep away from those who smoke, but in one way you can stay near them to see how awful it is."
"If there was someone who doesn´t smoke in the gang, you could be with him and then it´s not so bad."
"You can say your breath would smell so your father would notice."
"You can say no and use snuff instead."

When the arguments don´t work, you have to use your fists:

"I say I don´t want any because I don´t like it" - "If they think you are childish then?" - "Then I bash them."

The best thing would be if there were no cigarettes:

"It´s so stupid that they make cigarettes at all."

They believe they see through tobacco advertisements, which is usually considered stupid.

COMMENTS

In the 5th grade, children experience strong conflicts between different norms, and smoking becomes an example of this. Knowledge and opinions are no longer sufficient to guide one´s actions. It is not oneself, or wise and dependable adults, who decide what one is to do.

At the same time, the smoking situation becomes more and more common. In the 6th grade, 40 % of the pupils have already tried smoking, even if only 10 % smoke anyway regularly.

It would seem, therefore, that the 5th grade is a very important year as far as the opportunities to influence them on the question of tobacco is concerned. The pupils still have a negative attitude to smoking, don´t really want to smoke themselves, but need all the help they can get to stand up to the influences they are subjected to. The question is, which form should this help take? It appears that knowledge of the harmful effects is taken rather lightly. It´s not "in" to be afraid of being ill or poorly when you are 12 years old. Then you have to be tough and unafraid, and preferably look for danger. Personally, I think an increased conscious-

ness of how one is affected by the group on these questions would help. If you have had a discussion in class and discovered that noone really wants to smoke, it will be easier tc come back to that the next time a smoking situation occurs. How such lessons and discussions should be planned seems to be an important question to take further in this grade.

INTERVIEWS IN GRADE 7 WITH APPROXIMATELY 30 PUPILS

The 7th grade will no longer accept that group pressure has any importance, at the same time showing in their entire behaviour how strongly they are influenced by the group. It is even difficult to carry out certain of the group interviews just because of the participants' fear of speaking freely in front of their class-mates. Many talk openly and on equal terms in private with the interviewer, but are strongly inhibited in the group interviews by the presence of their class-mates. In the 5th grade, it was the exact reverse, they were open and spontaneous in the group but were often inhibited by the interviewer's adult authority in the individual interviews.

In the private interviews, we went for charting how the actual smoking habit had developed. It was difficult to obtain descriptions of individual smoking situations, many similar situations make it a rather general description. In some way it is part of the social development to smoke on the sly at some time.

Almost all had tried smoking in the middle level or even earlier. The smoking début usually occurs together with a best friend or in a group consisting of older children also.

> "It was an older friend. We just wanted to taste what it was like."
> "Just wanted to taste what it was like, I had seen others doing it."
> "Some friends were doing it, so I had a go."

Somebody suggests it and then everyone agrees to try smoking. They take cigarettes from home or go and buy a packet together. Or else they get offered one when they are together with

people other than their usual friends. They smoke outside, where noone from home can see.

> "We were at a friend´s house. It was because it was tough and exciting. It just happens. There was only the two of us. We went out into the dark so that noone could see us."
> "Maybe we went into the basement, we lived in a block of flats then".

It doesn´t usually taste very nice the first time, you cough and think it is awful. But it´s exciting, you feel quite grown-up and tough and want to satisfy your curiosity.

> "It wasn´t exactly nice. But after you´ve done it a few times it gets nicer."
> "It wasn´t all that good the first time, but you think it´s tough."
> "I thought it tasted horrible."

Then they continue to smoke occasionally in the same way, although they don´t really think that it tastes nice. When they have accepted others´ cigarettes a few times it feels embarassing, so they get hold of cigarettes themselves to offer back. Eventually they learn to like the taste.

What is interesting is really why some continue to develop the habit of smoking, while others leave it alone after a couple of tries. We have not been able to find a point in the development of the habit that is critical for the continuation of smoking or not. It seems to be as common to stop after a couple of tries as it is to stop after a couple of years´ comparatively regular smoking. The reasons for stopping vary.

> "I heard later that it was dangerous, so I stopped immediately."
> "It tastes awful."
> "I never did like it, although I did it anyway."
> "It got much too expensive."
> "If I smoked as I did before, I wouldn´t earn anything at my job in the shop."
> "I don´t smoke because otherwise I wouldn´t be strong enough to play ice-hockey."

Those who continue to smoke really want to stop, but in a

vague and passive way. They find it difficult to stop, although most of them haven't smoked so much as have had time to develop a kind of dependence.

> "Most people try to stop. I try myself."
> "We don't really want to, would like to stop, but..."
> "It is good when you are in hospital because then you can't smoke."
> "What would be a good thing is if cigarettes went up to 10-15 kronor" - "Yes, that's why it is like it is now, that's why we smoke so much, because it isn't so terribly expensive."

It is as though many are looking for a good argument, help to stop or refrain from smoking.

The reasons for continuing to smoke are experienced differently between smokers and non-smokers. The smokers claim that it tastes nice and deny that they think it is tough. They did in the middle level but not any longer. The non-smokers say that it is the toughness that weighs most. They smoke to

> "have the upper edge", and
> "look tough."
> "They try to look tough and "Here we come", they play grown-up."

We know from previous investigations that "toughness" characterises the picture of the smoker, but that doesn't state what the cause and effect is. Toughness includes smoking, drinking and going out a lot, preferably with older friends. There are therefore more ways of appearing tough in the 7th grade than in the 5th.

The group of friends seldom seems to discuss smoking. In effect they are very dependent on the smoking habits of those around them. The gang either consists of smokers or non-smokers, and if they change friends they change smoking habits. Anybody who doesn't smoke in a gang that smokes is simply not offered a cigarette, and the problem of saying no seldom arises. Dependence on the group is either unconscious or else independence is so important at this age that they can't admit it. It shows indirectly:

> "Adults who don't smoke probably didn't have any friends who smoked when they were young."

What happens if you refuse to smoke?

> "They would probably get sulky."
> "I usually say no, but some time in the week I say yes. Nothing happens if I say no, but it doesn't feel right. It feels bad to say no."
> "Yes, if everyone in the gang stops. If one stops, everybody stops."

One gang discusses how they could stop smoking and decides that some kind of system of fines would be a good idea. The money they collected could be used collectively. Another gang uses sport and training as their chief anti-smoking argument. Boys have more alternatives to smoking than girls.

The biggest problem in the 7th grade seems to be that they are bored. Anything that makes a break in routine is welcomed. Of course they think about global problems sometimes, pollution, war, etc. but above all they are concentrated on their own situation. There is nothing to do, the teachers are hopeless, parents don't understand anything, and it's not even much fun to be with friends.

COMMENTS

Smoking is not such an exciting event that it was at the middle level. Smoking is part of socialising in certain circles, but it doesn't seem to mean much in itself. The pattern is the same as in the 5th grade in that it is still a group activity. But smoking seems to serve other purposes than previously, it starts to attain more of an adult pattern. I believe this makes it both more difficult and easier to get at. More difficult because, for some, smoking has become an integrated part of the life pattern, easier because logical arguments should be more successful than before. (As a matter of fact, it is popular amongst adults to stop smoking). Mainly "adult" arguments about health, good training and economy are used against smoking. But neither adults nor children allow their lives to be steered by logic alone, for which we would probably be very grateful in other situations. So the question remains of how to make certain things so important for a person that they influence his actions. It is important

for young people to be independent and in the long run it is a question of a person's ability to influence his own situation. Can they be made to understand that, by smoking, they affect their environment, their health and economy and thereby the opportunity for other people to make an independent choice? This is one way of getting close to it. However, I don't believe this can be solved by information, it must come out in discussions and be based inside themselves. It is obvious that they themselves experience smoking as a problem, but they naturally do not want adults telling them what to think. There is still a lot of defiance in smoking.

IMPROVISATIONS

There was a double purpose behind letting the pupils themselves improvise different smoking situations. Firstly, I wanted to see if, through improvisation, I could reach an increased understanding of a pupil's manner of reasoning and acting regarding smoking and, secondly, I wanted to test the suitability of dramatic activities as an educational method in this field.

DRAMATIC ACTIVITIES

"During the pupil's entire period at school he must be given as many opportunities as possible to actively participate in forms of dramatic activity suitable to his age group." (Läroplan för grundskolan, 1969, p. 132).

What, then, is meant by dramatic activities? In the Swedish supplement to the curriculum (läroplan) (1969), a distinction is made between improvisation, supporting practice and dramatic moulding:

"By improvisation is meant here free dramatic activities, whereby the pupils present situations and events by simple, spontaneous, expressive movement and improvised speech". (p.7)

The idea of "supporting practice" includes other activities intended to aid pupils to use their imagination and broaden their register of expression, i.e. association practice, ex-

perience practice, movement practice and speech practice. "Dramatic moulding" is to try and get over what you are doing to a reception group. The bounderies between improvisation and dramatic moulding are therefore interchangeable.

Katarina Ehnmark (1971) has written a very comprehensive teachers' guide to dramatic activities in school, which is closely alligned with the objectives of the curriculum.

OBJECTIVE

Dramatic activities are justified in the supplement to the curriculum with that free, improvised dramatic moulding develops the personalities of the pupils just as much as their experience of dramatic litterature and art of presentation. For inhibited pupils it can also have a liberating effect to express oneself in colour, form and movement. Doris Wiklund (1972) summarises her point of view thus:

> "Drama is an activity which trains the pupil's ability to observe, to think and to express himself" (p. 19).

Kühnau & McEvan (1969) name the same field "educational drama" and have a similar objective in developing the personality:

> "Educational drama is built on a basic impulse of human beings, the need to express themselves. The leader can lead and direct this need in different directions and thereby help the pupils to think, feel and understand - Pupils become acquainted with their feelings, and the more acquainted one becomes with one's own feelings, the more imaginative and expressive one becomes as a person" (pp. 9-10).

Everywhere it is emphasized that this development is a long process and one is more or less warned against beginning with drama directly in a given subject study. (Wiklund, 1972).

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The supplement to the Curriculum (1969) and Ehnmark (1971) do not take up the role of the teacher in working with dramatic activities. Other authors, however, strongly emphasize

the demands of a different teaching role.

> "Some enthusiasts try to get us to believe that drama is something miraculously simple, and that you only have to get going. Pupils would quickly understand what it was all about and drama would develop of itself. Others talk seriously about this being a task only for qualified special teachers, with special pre-requisites and an artistic nature; about the need for analyses and deeper knowledge, about the development of personality and group dynamics; about the importance of the drama teacher himself attending a drama group regularly. The truth lies somewhere in between. " (Wiklund, 1972, p. 17).

I have had the opportunity of discussing dramatic activities with many teachers in connection with teacher study days on drug-education. I have noticed this cleavage, perhaps above all between teachers with old and new teacher-training backgrounds. There is a very positive attitude to working with dramatics in this field, but many teachers feel themselves to be incompetent.

THE PLANNING OF IMPROVISATIONS

Study of litterature on dramatic education has given me two important guidelines in planning continued research. One is that the leader of the improvisation ought to be the class´ normal teacher, the other that I should use classes who are used to working with dramatic activities. I have, however, realised that it is important to be present myself at the practice and furthermore, for the sake of documentation, to tape them. This is an encroachment on the aim of dramatic activities, namely that they should exist for the participants´ own sake. However, most classes were so used to working with dramatic activities of different kinds, that the presence of myself and my tape recorder didn´t seem to trouble them especially. I will come back to this point when giving an account of the different classes.

INVESTIGATION GROUPS

I came into contact with some teachers who do a lot of work with dramatic activities in their classes through a lecturer in dramatics at the Teacher Training College in Mölndal.

There were two teachers at the middle level and a Swedish teacher at the upper level. They read my report on interview investigation and were very interested in taking part in the experiment with improvisations. We discussed the planning at meetings together.

I wanted to find as many ways as possible to attack the problem and strongly emphasized the teachers' freedom in drafting the experiment themselves in a way that suited the class' manner of working. The results of the interview investigation would only be used as a source of inspiration and my role would be that of the passive onlooker.

While we were working with one of the classes, a third middle level teacher became interested. She had not previously worked with dramatic activities with her class but was willing to try improvisations anyway.

Finally improvisations carried out in one class each of the 4th, 5th and 6th grades at middle level and in two classes of the 8th grade at upper level. Classes 4 and 6 came from Kungsbacka, class 5 from Mölndal and class 8 from Hjällbo, which is a Gothenburg suburb.

I will give an account of how the attempt was organised in each class separately to try and give as complete a picture as possible of how dramatic activities can be used in tobacco education. The improvisations, however, are not accounted for in their entirety.

A CLASS IN THE 4TH GRADE

The class has been working to some extent with dramatic activities during the Autumn term. The teacher had only mentioned in passing that I would be coming to listen to a lesson on smoking. I gave a brief description of how I try to help teachers to find as good educational methods as possible on smoking and I was therefore going round listening to smoking lessons in different classes. Altogether I spent 4 modules (20-minute periods) in the class. The instruction was carried out with a divided class.

The pupils grouped themselves in the shape of a horseshoe with the teacher at the apex. The teacher starts with questions about how many come from completely smoke-free homes. The pupils immediately started to talk spontaneously and enthusiastically about what it was like when parents and visitors smoked at home. They told of their parents' unsuccessful attempts to stop smoking and their own usually unsuccessful attempts to influence their parents' smoking habits.

The teacher ties up with the pupils' accounts and asks a couple of them to improvise a situation where a child tries to get his mother to stop smoking. The chosen pupils without preparation or protest act such a scene. I take it for granted that the teacher has chosen a couple of confident and spontaneous pupils, but it later turns out that all the pupils react in the same way to the teacher's suggestion. Occasionally they ask for hints or explanations, but there is no hesitation in participating and no obvious need for preparation. The teacher suggests subjects for improvisation based on the discussion, which continues the whole time in between the improvisations. For example, when someone says that he wouldn't dare be so tough towards his parents, he is instructed to act together with a class-mate what it would sound like at his house instead. Some of the improvisations dealt with what happened when they started to smoke, others with how one friend tries to persuade another to stop smoking. Some try to interview their frind on why he smokes.

One gets the strong impression that the problem of smoking has not arisen yet for these pupils, apart from indirect smoking. When they act smoking situations, they often pretend to be older than they really are so that it sounds natural. In this way, they are most like the pupils in the 3rd grade who took part in the interview investigation.

The anti-smoking arguments used to influence their parents are:

"You can't breathe in here."
"I can't bring my friends home, they leave the house as soon as they feel the smell."
"Not one friend I know has a mother and father who smoke."
"Must you smoke, I can hardly see the television screen?"

"The air is absolutely black, is that necessary?"
"I don´t even get my pocket money at the right time, you spend all the money on cigarettes."
"Do you know, I could buy lots of bags of sweets for all that money you spend on cigarettes."

The pupil who used the last-mentioned argument was skating on thin ice and in the discussion afterwards everyone agreed that you should be very careful of bringing your own sweet eating into the argument. This seems to be the "vice" which is most current in this grade. Noone succeeds in influencing his parents to stop smoking in the improvisations.

Within the group of friends, other arguments are partly used

"It tastes so awful."
"Your lungs get all black and you get sick and everything."
"It´s stupid and it smells bad too."

Those who are to persuade their frinds to smoke say:

"I´ll give you a £ 1 if you smoke."
"You´re a coward, don´t dare for your Mum and Dad, eh?"
"Maybe you are going in for sports and think you won´t be a new Björn Borg if you smoke?"
"It tastes quite nice and everyone else does it, it feels daft not to do it."
"You can´t play with us otherwise."
"I coughed a bit to start with too, it´s not so bad."

In the discussions afterwards it came out that they never talk this way about smoking in reality. The pupils have to use their imagination and act the way they think it will be in a few years´ time since they have no experience of their own of the situations.

COMMENTS

I didn´t find that the improvisations in this class gave me any further knowledge on the phenomenon of children smoking. On the other hand, I believe it would have been an excellent introduction to tobacco education. The pupils brought up the health aspect but had rather a vague idea in which way smoking had a harmful effect on the body. They were conscious of the influence of friends and open to discussion on how to resist it. They were interested in the economical side of smoking. Above all, they were interested in and receptive to informa-

tion about passive smoking, since this is the problem most applicable to themselves.

Starting tobacco education with this type of improvisation should give the teacher a great deal of information on which aspects are relevant to take up.

A CLASS IN THE 5TH GRADE

The class is very used to working with different forms of dramatic activity. It is also used to having observer visitors and trainee teachers in the classroom and didn´t take much notice of my presence.

The teacher planned an instructional unit on smoking and incorporated improvisations as a part of the unit. I only took part in the actual improvisation and therefore give an account of the teacher´s own description of the instruction up until the 5th lesson, when the improvisations started:

> "An attempt using DIALOGUES and ROLE-PLAYS to work within the field 'We ourselves' from the middle level´s Orientational Subjects.
>
> Lesson 1: I chose to start with the extract 'We can be dependent on...tobacco'. I didn´t consider that we had the slightest help from the Teachers´ Book. I worked on the assumption that the pupils knew what could be read there. I also assumed that the pupils had masses of experience and quite a lot of knowledge in connection with tobacco and smoking.
>
> The lesson began, therefore, with a kind of dialogue. My first question was, 'what do you think of when you hear the word S M O K E?'They waved their hands in the air, but I said, 'Tell each other what you thought of'. Two by two they all put their heads together and started to talk. After a few minutes, the pupils could 'get it off their chest' to me too. They also asked me questions. Most of the questions and information dealt with tobacco and their own impressions of smoking. They were very interested in my own smoking habits and couldn´t understand how I could stand it in the teachers´ common room.
>
> Lesson 2: The initial assumption was now that the pupils have a certain vocabulary in connection with tobacco and smoking. I repeated several words that had already been mentioned in sentences (nicotine, unpleasant, cough, tar, stupid...)
> 'Do you know any other words about this'
> The inventory gave an amazing result. The discussion afterwards clearly showed that the words were not part

of their passive vocabulary. In order to be able to use the words so feelingly and spontaneously, they must have had both knowledge and actual experience.

Lesson 3: On several occasions, the fact that tobacco and influence has a strong connection arose. Both frightening and moving episodes from different environments were told:
Jeering and mobbing from the same age group and older. Tempting invitations from adults and commercial publicity. Also of parents who had made 'Sacrifices', stopped smoking etc.
The influence of friends seems to be very present. My outline for the 3rd lesson became 'Discussion - acting improvisations - possible discussion. I wrote a few sentences on the board and said that these are part of situations they had or could take part in - 'Try to get one, or all of them if you want to, into a happening. It doesn't matter if you get angry, sad or shout.'

A few groups began spontaneously out on the floor, others chose to talk first. For them I didn't exist, in fact I was in the way.

Lesson 4: 'How did it feel?' 'Could it have happened like that?' Protest from one 'it was like that!' 'Would you have liked to say more?' 'Did you swear?' 'Did you fight?' 'Did you tease?'

This was approximately how my 4th lesson started. Then I instructed them to discuss this in groups of 4. After a few minutes, one person in each group visited another group to find out what they were talking about. The visitor then went 'home' again and recounted.

Lesson 5: There was a great deal of sensitivity in a qualitative way. There was not mistaking the involvement. I therefore wanted to document the actions and said to the pupils that I would like to tape what was said. 'Discuss with each other how the first sentences could sound, do you want to add anything...?'"

First a few words about the pupils' associations when the teacher gave them the word "smoke" (the teacher asked them to write them down in the last lesson). I amused myself by counting how many pupils used the different words. The most common word was cough, used by 18 (of 25) pupils, then came nicotine (16 pupils), headache and tar (15), dangerous (14), influence (13), tempting (11), cigarettes (8). Altogether, the pupils used 68 different words, some of which were of course synonyms. One must remember that the class had talked about these words during the first lesson and this naturally influenced the result.

I give an account of this part of the instruction with the idea that a teacher who feels insecure of working with improvisations can instead use this method of getting a discussion going on smoking.

The replies the teacher gave the pupils as "stimulus words" before the improvisations were:

"Look, a packet of cigarettes".
"Can I help you"?
"Come on, let´s go and have a puff".

"Look, a packet of cigarettes" inspired scenes of the first puff. They are influenced by others to try, often with quite raw methods. They are threatened with being beaten, they are mobbed in different ways. The first puff without exception leads to coughing, feeling sick, growing green. Often they were discovered by an adult, who shouted and threatened.

"Can I help you?" is the introduction to similar scenes, the difference being that they start by buying the cigarettes themselves. In one of the improvisations, they were forced to show false identification papers in order to be able to buy them, the mother forces the child to confess and apologise and a great deal of the improvisation deals with the mother´s helplessness when faced with the tough daughter. In another, cigarettes are stolen, in a third they lie and say that they are buying cigarettes for their parents.

"Come on, let´s go and have a puff" were not used as stimulus words by any group, but are merely used once as a reply to "Look, a packet of cigarettes". In this improvisation there are a number of arguments against smoking such as:

"Don´t you know it´s very dangerous? You become a living tar bucket."
"You get full of tar and the flagella here in your throat get all mucked up and terrible, it gets full of phlegm and then there´s all that smoke and ash."
"Oh, oh, you have no right to hit me, I don´t want any, you can´t make me."

The only argument in favour of smoking is that it´s nice because it tastes of liquorice.

COMMENTS

The improvisations in this class felt as though they reflected reality. The pupils in the discussions afterwards claimed that this was the way it happened. One of the reasons for it feeling right was probably that debates on the pros and cons of smoking were usually missing. Instead the pupils acted concrete situations and courses of events. They acted without inhibitions and, in spite of the often exaggerated drama, there was the feeling of witnessing actual events. One of the reasons could be that these pupils are very used to dramatisation. However, I believe rather in the explanation that the stimulus words in themselves were so neutral that they didn't steer the pupils to any great extent. They simply didn't get the idea of discussing and trying to influence each other in any way by verbal means, since that is not what occurs in reality.

These pupils had had several lessons on smoking over the last few days. As an adult, perhaps one would think that this would inspire them to use logical arguments and knowledge about smoking in such situations. The fact that they don't shows that it isn't knowledge of smoking's harmful effects that the pupils lack, which I thought I had already noticed during the interview investigation. There are quite other factors than knowledge and logic in effect in smoking situations.

A CLASS IN THE 6TH GRADE

This class had never previously worked with improvisations or any other form of dramatic activity. Since the teacher was interested, in spite of this, in taking part in the experiment, I saw the chance of testing whether the method can function without habit or preparation. The teacher had only informed the class that I was working on an investigation into smoking and was interested in what young people thought about smoking. The attempt lasted 2 modules and the whole class took part.

The teacher instructs the pupils to act a situation where smokers met non-smokers. She divids them into groups of three

and they get a few minutes to prepare what to say.

The groups get up to the teacher´s desk one at a time and perform their acts. A couple of pupils say they have not been able to find out what to say. In the second part the teacher divides the class into different groups, and this time everybody participates.

The improvisations that were acted were very short and similar to each other. I give an account of the longest ones in their entirety to give an idea of what it could sound like.

1. A and B are standing smoking. C comes up to them. All are boys.

   A. "What are you doing?"
   B. "Would you like a puff?"
   C. "Noooo, it´s not nice."
   B. "Yes it is, it´s lovely."
   C. "Noooo."
   B. "Yeah, go on."
   C. "Shall we go home to my house?"
   B. "Nah, what are we going to do there?"
   C. "Yes, we can listen to records."
   B. "No, no."
   A. "D´you want a puff?"
   C. "Nah."
   B. "It´s great."
   C. "No it´s not."
   B. "Have you ever tried?"
   C. "Nah."
   A. "Go on then, try it."

   C takes a puff.

   C. "Er, it´s horrible, phew."
   B. "Try again."

   C takes another puff.

   C. "It´s quite nice."
   B. "OK take one then."
   C. "Shall we go to my house then, and listen to records."
   B. "Ok let´s go then."

2. Two boys are standing smoking (A and B). A girl comes along. (C)

   C. "Hello, what are you up to?"
   A. "Can´t you see?"
   C. "Of course I can see, but...can´t you find anything else to do?"
   A + B. "Nah."
   C."It´s dangerous to smoke, don´t you know that?"
   A. "Oh come on, stop it. Do you want one?"
   C. "No, I don´t want one at all."

B. "Then you can clear off."
C. "Why? I can stay anyway, can´t I?"
B. "Nah."
C. "Yes I can."
A. "Nah."
C. "Yes I can, I don´t have to get poisoned because of that."

Long pause.

C. "I´d better try one then."

C smokes.

C. "Actually, it wasn´t bad."
B. "There you are, I told you so."
A. "What sort of poison was it you were talking about?"
C. "Oh, it was just a daft film at school."
A. "Oh I see, well I´ve got to buzz off home. Bye."
B + C. "Bye."

When the improvisations were finished, I pointed out that it was always the smokers who "won" and that everyone was terribly easily persuaded. I wondered too, if it was really so that everyone thought it tasted nice the first time. I asked them to do another improvisation, but with the roles exchanged, i.e. the non-smokers try to influence the smokers instead of vice versa. Everyone is interested and participates eagerly in this too.

It is obvious that this is even more of an artificial situation for them than the last one. After a short discussion on how tough and stupid it is to smoke, dangerous or not dangerous, if you can swop over from a smoking gang to a non-smoking one, each improvisation ends up with the smokers in a scarcely convincing way deciding not to smoke. The arguments the smokers use are:

"It´s real tough."
"Because it´s nice."
"To be with the others, the big ones."
"Otherwise I can´t belong to the gang."

After this round of improvisations, I bring up the question of cost in connection with smoking, since noone has mentioned it, but I don´t get any sympathy. What transpires in the discussion afterwards is that every one in the gang smokes or else noone does. If they know any older children they smoke together with them, otherwise with children of their own age. When I ask which argument one can use against smoking, there

is dead silence. Eventually suggestions come that it is stupid, costs a lot of money, it´s better to be healthy.

COMMENTS

In this class there was a distinct feeling that I was a foreigner who came and disturbed their working routine. They were interested and positive, but it was noticeable that they weren´t used to working in this way. They seemed quite disturbed by the presence of myself and my tape-recorder, and it is therefore impossible to know what would have happened if the class had been allowed to work on the improvisations in peace and quiet. I also had the feeling that the pupils were too steered by the suggestions for content made by myself and the teacher. But it is also possible that the relatively strong steering was the reason for them taking part and trying. If you want to try and work with this kind of improvisation in a class which is quite unused to dramatic activities, it would seem to be wisest to start with discussions, preferably in small groups, on different smoking situations. From these discussions, one can later take ideas for the different situations that can be improvised. I think that it is important to make the improvisations only a minor part of the educational unit to start with, not the major task, which was what I tried here. Of course, it is also easier if there is the possibility of working with half the class.

It is important not to have too great expectations of the improvisations if one is using them in this way. Dramatic activity is something which functions in the long-term and is not learned at the drop of a hat. Björn Magnér has written a book called "Improvisera och diskutera" (1977). It describes how one can use improvisations with young people who are not used to other forms of dramatic activity. This ought to be an aid to teachers who want to work in the same kind of way that I have suggested here.

TWO CLASSES IN THE 8TH GRADE

The teacher teaches Swedish in these two classes. They have worked with dramatic activities for almost three terms. The

teacher makes use of the periods that she has only half the class for this. I participated for two modules in each of the four half-classes.

The teacher had prepared them for my arrival and they were positive to taking part. They wondered somewhat over whether they would be on TV or the radio, and it was obviously somewhat dramatic that their improvisations would be taped. They felt especially chosen. The classes were not occupied with smoking at that stage but, as stated, they were used to working with drama of different kinds.

The teacher had suggested certain subjects for improvisation after having read my interview report. One of the subjects was on what happens when a parent discovers that his son or daughter has started to smoke. Another dealt with a gang who meet again after the summer holiday. Three of the members have started smoking and the fourth hasn't. The smokers try to influence the fourth to start smoking too, but he doesn't want to. What do they say? Waht does it sound like? A third improvisation dealt with the reverse situation. Only one of the gang had started to smoke and the others tried to get him or her to stop. How does that sound?

A fourth suggestion dealt with what happens when a non-smoker joins a new class and wants to become a member of a gang who smoke. A fifth suggestion was about the actual smoking début, but no group wanted to do this one. One got the feeling that they had got past this stage. In the same way, a completely free situation which meant that they themselves could plan a situation in connection with smoking was turned down by all the groups.

Two of the improvisations dealt with a parent who had discovered that his son/daughter has started smoking. One of them, a father, is aggressive and explains how terribly dangerous it is, sending the boy to bed. "You haven't started taking dope too, have you?" he asks accusingly. The other improvisation presents a mother who listens and asks questions in a gentle and sympathetic manner. She pleads with the

daughter to try and give it up. That smoking is not a good thing is implied in the conversation. The reason why the daughter smokes is that she has nothing else to do.

In the discussions afterwards it transpires that the mother gets a lot of sympathy but the father-figure was unfortunately more common. "That´s the way parents think". Both the young people give as a reason that everybody else smokes and that there is nothing else to do.

The improvisations about gangs, where some smoke and some do not, are a rich sample of arguments against smoking.

> "It´s unnecessary, you only destroy yourself by doing it."
> "You´re throwing away a lot of money."
> "No, it´s not good to smoke."
> "No, I don´t like cigarettes."
> "No, I cough."
> "No, I think it´s daft to smoke."
> "You can get lung cancer and all kinds of things."
> "I´ve tried it but it wasn´t nice, so I´m not going to start."

The arguments for smoking, or rather explanations why they smoke deal with the influence of friends and lack of alternatives.

> "Everybody does it."
> "You´ve got to have some fun."
> "I tasted friends´ cigarettes and didn´t think they were bad."
> "I only do it to have something to do."
> "But it´s calming and nice and so on."
> "But I can´t keep my hands still and I´ve got to do something.
> "When you get nervous, you light a cigarette."

At suggestions from the non-smokers to join them instead of the smokers

> "Yes, I´ve thought about giving it up - but perhaps I won´t be with you always and maybe I´ll be with a friend, you see, and maybe he smokes and then I´ll be sitting there like and be wanting a tag and so on, and then you can´t help it."

In the discussions, it was discovered that smokers only have

friends who smoke and vice versa. The smoker is therefore continually open to temptation and the influence of friends, while the non-smoker almost never is. Many of the smokers experience a craving for cigarettes, feel restless, get "hungry". Many associate smoking with other problems, the boy who played the father asked his son whether he took dope too. Several of the groups talk about drinking, shop-lifting and deceiving their parents. The solutions suggested are either to change gangs or that everyone in the school makes an agreement to stop smoking simultaneously.

Those who try to persuade a friend to join them in smoking can use such pressuring as:

"You are a bloody sissy."
"You'll never get into a gang."
"You're damn stupid."
"Take a cigarette, otherwise you're dumb."
"To be friendly."
"Smoking is nice. Have a cigarette."
"You're hopeless, I bet you don't dare."
"Come on, damn you, take one."

This situation feels unnatural to them. In reality. they claim, you never try to persuade someone to smoke. If anybody does any persuading, it's the non-smokers. They believe that anyone who has smoked long enough, really would like to stop. To start with, you think it's tough and grown-up to smoke, you're curious, it's exciting. You feel proud and adult when you've bought your first packet of cigarettes and didn't need to ask someone else for one. But most of them consider this stage to be passed. Now they smoke for lack of anything better to do.

COMMENTS

This would seem to be a suitable age group for this type of improvisation and discussion. In these two classes of tough 8th graders, there were only two boys who refused to participate and a couple of others who were a little too tough to act their roles properly. It was very noticeable that these young people were used to working in this way. But it takes time to learn. The teacher also teaches two classes in the 7th grade but didn't think there was any idea in attempting

the improvisations with them since they weren't sufficiently used to the method of working after only one term.

There was a different picture of smoking here than in the middle level. The role of a smoker or non-smoker is relatively well-established. They no longer smoke from curiousity or to appear tough. They smoke because "that's the way it is." Their friends smoke in the smoking area or the youth club. They say that there is nothing else to do. In spite of the fact that this school has spent a lot on activities during the breaks and free periods and employs special recreation leaders for this purpose. That's fine, the pupils think, but it's too tiring to do anything else than stand and talk or go to the smoking area.

RESULTS

One of the objectives of the improvisations was to broaden the knowledge of pupils' smoking habits that we had obtained in the interviews. This objective has been reached above all in two respects. One is that the picture the improvisations gave of smoking in the different age groups agreed very well with the picture obtained in the interviews. The other concerned the manner of reasoning within the group of friends. It was shown that in most cases they don't reason at all! The influence which takes place within the group of friends is very subliminal, which was shown to a much greater extent in the improvisations than in the interviews. Discussion and attempts at persuasion in one direction or the other almost never occurred. When instructed to improvise a situation where they tried to influence the smoking habits of others or defend their own, it therefore felt artificial. This became quite obvious, above all in the discussions after the improvisations.

What is the purpose, then, of getting the pupils to act artificial improvisation?

The purpose is to increase the pupils' own awareness as to why they smoke. A good way of doing this is to let them utter

and hear uttered different arguments for and against smoking. The reasons behind smoking are seldom of the kind that one wants to speak about openly. Many of them are like the devil - they disappear in the daylight. Those who act the part of non-smokers in the improvisations had a definite advantage, their reasons are more difficult to dismiss with argument. Experiencing this can lessen the fear of playing the part of a non-smoker in real life. Most of the smokers´ reasons, on the other hand, were of the kind that only function at an indirect level. You can appear tough by smoking, but as soon as you admit that you smoke to be tough, you have, in effect, proved the opposite. You are not tough but have to smoke to make that impression.

It is therefore a difficult and ungrateful role to play a smoker in these improvisations, and naturally the hope is that experiences of this kind will have consequences in the choice of role in reality. Improvisations aim at helping change both attitudes and behaviour. It´s a matter of putting oneself into different situations and into the ways of how people think and act. One could call this experiencial learning. Events which comprise experiences are stamped in, it is such events that one remembers and learns by. One is influenced by playing the role of a non-smoker by hearing oneself make critical statements against smoking, see the smoker from the angle of the non-smoker, listen to and evaluate his arguments in a critical way. One has experienced the thoughts and feelings of a non-smoker and thereby gone a long or short distance towards identifying oneself as a non-smoker. But what happens to the opposite party who plays a smoker? The experience I gained in the investigation shows that the smoker has a great deal of difficulty in upholding his role, when smoking is scrutinised in this way. It is difficult to think of suitable arguments and this should rather lead to avoiding the role of the smoker. But naturally the teacher must be observant of this. In the distribution of roles, one can take it into consideration and only allow very convinced non-smokers to play the part of a smoker. Additional improvisations can be used, where the conditions and distribution of roles is reversed.

My other purpose with the investigation was to test improvisations as an educational method in the tobacco area. My experience of the attempts has convinced me that it is a good method. I do not support this by any verified experiments. I have not investigated whether pupils who have worked with dramatic activities in the tobacco area smoke less than those who haven't. On the other hand, I have shown that the method works in smoking education to the extent that it can make the pupils involved in the subject and take up important aspects of it for discussion. The method can create a conscious and active learning by the pupils, which is the pre-requisite for their learning being meaningful and of consequence in their actions.

RECAPITULATION

The objective of the project is to find out why children smoke and which arguments against smoking could influence children of different ages not to smoke.

About 80 children in the 3rd, 5th and 7th grades were interviewed about their smoking habits and their views on smoking. Some of the children were interviewed individually, others in small groups. One class each from the 4th, 5th and 6th grades and two classes from the 8th grade worked with improvisations around smoking situations. All of the activities were taped and analysed afterwards.

Smoking does not arise for children before the 5th or 6th grade, only in exceptional cases. There was a previous strongly negative attitude to smoking, based mainly on the childrens' experience of so-called passive smoking. But in the middle level it begins to be important to be tough. They can no longer refer to parents or the health risks when they don't want to smoke. Smoking is something which is forbidden and therefore very exciting. At the upper level, smoking takes on a more adult pattern. Smoking is no longer an important factor in itself, but rather sign of lack of more interesting occupations. They would like to stop smoking if they could only find a better way to pass the time.

At all ages, the pupils talk very little about smoking amongst themselves. The investigation points out the importance of talking and debating the smoking problem in order to increase the childrens' awareness of what influences their own and others'- smoking behaviour. Improvisations and other forms of dramatic activities are recommended as a method of involvment and adding insight into different ways of thinking and acting with regard to smoking.

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